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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES DIRECTOR
GENERAL RIFI

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Michele J. Sison for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) General Achraf Rifi, Director General of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF), in his first meeting with Charge Sison reiterated his and the ISF's appreciation for the active U.S. support for his forces and the continued need for additional training, equipment and infrastructure improvements. Stressing the increase in ISF's responsibilities in countering terrorism and investigating politically inspired assassinations, he provided an overview of the expanded role of the ISF since 2005. Rifi delineated the areas where gaps or weaknesses continue to exist in terms of internal security, and mentioned ISF's proposed growing role in border security. Understanding that continued U.S. assistance depends on proof that our training and equipment has been utilized by the ISF, Rifi promised to prepare and present a report to the Charge, detailing how our assistance has aided the ISF in its increasingly demanding operations. End Summary.

12. (U) In an introductory meeting with Charge Sison, attended by RSO, INL, Legatt, and Colonel Wissam Hassan, head of the ISF Information Unit, General Rifi began by thanking the USG for its support of the ISF and of Lebanon, and added immediately thereafter that the ISF will definitely be asking for more assistance. Following her summary of the USG's strong history of assistance for the security sector in Lebanon, including the new INL Lebanon Police Program, the FBI's training and donation of equipment for a new Lebanese Evidence Response Team, and the RSO's ATA training, the Charge reiterated the USG's support for the institutions of Lebanon. She emphasized that the US is looking at new areas where we could offer additional assistance to the ISF.

13. (C) Rifi laid out what he saw as the four main areas where serious security gaps exist in Lebanon: the Palestinian camps, Palestinian training camps, the security perimeter and the land borders where weapons and ammunition enter without control. Stressing the importance of improving security on the land borders which present the biggest problem in his estimation, Rifi noted that the ISF has been named as the head of the new Border Commission, with the LAF bearing responsibility for enforcement over the Northern border.

14. (C) The German sponsored Pilot Program for the Common Border Project is jointly coordinated by ISF and LAF, said

Rifi, and its original start date of two and one half months ago was delayed for two months due to the late arrival of equipment and the Naher Al Bared fighting. Admitting that he felt Germany had some initial reservations about the project, he stated that it is up and running for the last two weeks, and that a joint operations room has been set up with all four security agencies working together for the first time in the history of Lebanon. Optimistically opining that all problems with the Pilot Program will be resolved and all loopholes will be closed, Rifi foresees concrete results in three months, at which time the Pilot Program can move beyond the Northern border and begin to concentrate on the Eastern border and into the Beqaa. He attributes past problems with any border project to Syrian intelligence's interference and the perception by the people who live along the border tht their livelihoods would be destroyed if the boder is truly enforced and secured. The focus will be on interdiction of weapons and drugs and the hindrance of movement of terrorist elements, added Rifi.

15. (C) Reserving a special thanks to the FBI for its Evidence Response Team training and equipment and its recent hosting of a visit for the head of the ISF Black Panthers or SWAT team, Rifi noted that USG assistance to the SWAT team had been particularly beneficial to the ISF. Rifi expressed concern about Hezbollah launching attacks from Lebanese territory, and the explosive risk that exposes to Lebanon. Stressing that the Lebanese state should be the strongest party and control the strongest security force, Rifi cited the broad support the ISF gets from the government of Lebanon, including the Sunnis (Hariri), the Druze (Jumblatt) and the Christians (Gemayel and Geagea).

16. (C) In order to be an effective force, Rifi says it needs

* Missing Section 002 *
